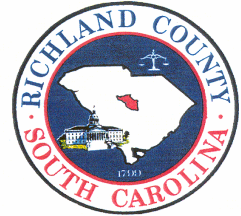


Richland Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

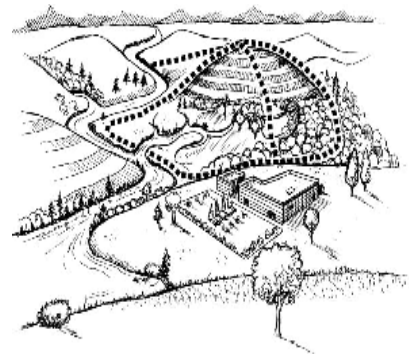
August 2007

803-576-2080



What is a Watershed ? and Why Should I Care!

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a lake or river. As rainwater runs downhill, it carries sediment and other materials into our streams, lakes, wetlands and groundwater. Your watershed is important because we all live in a watershed. Watersheds are the places we call home, where we work and play. Everyone relies on water and other natural resources to exist. What you and others do on the land impacts the quality and quantity of water.



Healthy watersheds are vital for a healthy environment and economy. Our watersheds provide water for drinking, irrigation and industry. Many people also enjoy lakes and streams for boating, fishing and swimming. Wildlife also need healthy watersheds for food and shelter.

In the past, most water quality problems were traced to the most obvious cause, point source pollution. This means the problem can be traced to a specific location such as a pipe or disposal site. Technical and regulatory methods have been used to detect and control these problems. Much progress has been made .

However problems from nonpoint-source pollution are more difficult to isolate and control. These sources are often hard to identify and difficult to measure. Nonpoint-source pollutants are in the water that runs off crop or forest land. Others include failing septic systems, parking lots, construction sites, irrigation systems and drainage systems. It can even result from automobile exhaust getting into the atmosphere and falling back to earth in the rain.

A partnership among all who live in a watershed can help identify concerns, educate those involved and encourage them to take action. Watershed management plans focus on prevention of pollution. This is easier and cheaper than trying to cleanup a watershed after the fact. Get involved in YOUR watershed!

For more information see **Watershed Information Network** on the Internet

Backyard Wildlife Management

By: Shaun Worley

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

An often overlooked aspect of the ecosystem by those interested in wildlife management is that most easily accessible and routinely available prime habitat that exists behind each of our houses. All of those nicely shaped shrubs made to give privacy from neighbors; that fence line that has avoided the weed-eater for the last two summers, and those old fruit trees that used to make enough to break the branches might be the best place to start when you wish to attract migratory songbirds and other critters to your residence.

Bird watching and all of its components has, in recent years, become *the most* popular hobby for those who have indicated an interest in outdoor activities. And to answer your question; yes, even surpassing hunting and fishing... bird watching is a billion dollar business. Companies have quietly cashed in on assorted bird seed, black oil sunflower seed, binoculars, field guides, and elaborate bird feeders and houses. If you've purchased any of these recently, you have noticed that they're not cheap, especially some of the more specialized seeds such as sunflower and thistle. While prepared bird seed is indeed attractive and nutritious to birds, it can be enhanced with the addition of some management techniques that will make *your* backyard a daily retreat for our feathered friends.

Most folks can't wait to get that lawnmower and weedeater fired up at the first sign of spring. If you're interested in attracting songbirds to your property, spare a few areas of your backyard from the lawnmower for a month or two in order to allow seed heads to develop on the grasses that inhabit your yard. Going a step further, several nurseries stock supplies of native grasses such as Switch Grass, Indian Grass, or Little Bluestem. These can be planted on the borders of your yard and allowed to flourish with minimal maintenance. Of course, all of this can be done in places that aren't visible to your neighbors or visitors so that you aren't the subject of speculation about your ability or desire to take care of your yard! If this is a genuine concern and you wish to enhance the appearance of your yard, then planting wildflowers along fence borders or between shrubbery is an alternative or a companion, however you choose to manage it. Wildflowers are insect magnets and, in turn, attract birds. These can be purchased as seeds in any garden shop and one canister will provide enough to cover about 650 square feet with minimal preparation.

Further, take care in the placement and maintenance of your bird feeders and baths. While thick shrubbery and tall grasses are attractive hiding and nesting places for birds, putting feeders or baths *too* close to unmaintained areas, or tall, thick shrubs is an invitation to predators looking to take advantage of the great hiding places you have provided to set up an ambush. Savvy predators, such as your house cat, will hone in on the concentrations of birds at such a convenient locale. Also, be sure to clean out bird feeders soon after they are empty with some hot water. This prevents bacteria from growing on old seed and reduces the likelihood of spread of communicable diseases from one bird to another. Bird feeders, if not properly maintained, can quickly become a hazard rather than a help.

Lastly, if you're going to feed birds and be diligent about it, you should consider doing it year round. Everyone fills up their bird feeder in the spring time, because traditionally this is when most migrant birds are making their way back from the south. However, not all birds migrate. Late summer through winter is the toughest time of the year for our resident bird population and the time when supplemental feeders are the most important. Spring provides for an abundance of natural food, and your bird feeder becomes nothing more than a desert tray, but in the winter it could mean life and death.

As a general rule, most biologists recommend an "ugly farming" technique when giving advice on wildlife management on retired crop or pastureland. Managing hedgerows, uneven field borders, high grass areas, and light disking in no certain pattern, provide for a wide array of successional stages beneficial to an assortment of wildlife. While this type of management is done on recommendation, backyards are inherently managed for early succession. A little consideration in the way you do your yard maintenance is all it takes to see an increase in the number of bird visitors that you have.



Meet Commissioner Ken Mullis



James Kenneth Mullis, Jr. grew up on a family-owned National Bicentennial Farm in Blythewood. He and his wife, Sha, still reside on the farm, along with their daughter, Bailey, the seventh generation to live there. Although the farm is scaled back, Mullis enjoys raising horses, cattle, hay and timber.

Mullis received his A.S from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and his B.S. in Agricultural Engineering from Clemson University. Mullis spent eight years with Michelin in maintenance engineering management. Currently, he works for the SC Forestry commission as a warden technician, fighting forest fires and managing timber, When not doing forestry work, Mullis provides custom farm services, including pasture management and erosion control. Many equestrian farm owners have also found him to be extremely helpful in training problem horses.

Mullis serves as chairman of the SC Association of Conservation Districts Forestry Wildlife and Recreation Committee, and as a board member of the East Piedmont Resource Conservation and Development Council (EPRC&D). He is an active member of Trinity United Methodist Church, where he serves as part-time facilities manager.

Like his father and grandfather, who were both long time Richland Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners, Mullis is very passionate about being a good steward of our earth by wisely using and conserving our God given natural resources. He appreciates nature, and enjoys fishing and hunting in his spare time.



Farm-City Week 2007

This year the Richland County's Farm-City Week will honor the horse, who has served us so nobly throughout the years. Horses have plowed the farms, gone into battle and provided the horse power to build our cities. Whether on the farm or in the city, the horse has been a rich part of our heritage. The Farm-City Week contest theme will celebrate horses and the vast industry that sustains them. Even though Richland County is primarily urban there are approximately 3,000 horses in the county which has a tremendous impact on our economy. The contests are open to all students in Richland County. The contests consist of Bulletin Board, Essay, Dress-Up and Photography. We will also be offering a \$500.00 scholarship to a High School senior. For more information on these activities, please call Mary Jane Henderson, Education Coordinator at 803-576-2083 or 576-2080.

POND MANAGEMENT 101

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2007, 5:00 – 9:00 PM

LAKEHOUSE - SANDHILL RESEARCH & EDUCATION CENTER

- Registration for this program will be \$20/person or \$30/couple
 - Pond walk starts at 5:00 and Fish Fry Meal at 6:00

Workshop instructors include:

- Jack M. Whetstone - Associate Professor, Ext. Aquatic Specialist
 - Hugh Caldwell – Richland Conservation District
 - Richard Yetter – State Wildlife Biologist - NRCS
 - All participants will receive handouts
- Pesticide Recertification Credits have been applied for



Directions to Sandhill Lakehouse, Columbia, SC

From I-20, take the Clemson Road north. Cross over Rt 1, Two Notch Rd, turn right onto Clemson U. Sandhill REC property. Follow dirt road straight down to the Lakehouse.

**Pre-register by September 18, by returning the bottom of this form along with your \$20-\$30 registration fee to Richland County Extension Service,
900 Clemson Rd, Columbia, SC 29229.**

Checks should be made payable to: Clemson University

If you have questions, please contact Howard van Dijk 803-865-1216 hdijk@clemson.edu

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer. Should you require special accommodations due to disability, please notify our office at least ten days prior to event.

Sign up for Master Naturalist Program

The Master Naturalist Program is sponsored by Clemson University. Classes are held throughout the state. The midlands class is held at the Sandhill Research and Education Center, at 900 Clemson Rd, in Columbia SC. Classes will be held from 9 AM to 3 PM, every **Friday**, beginning Sept 14 and ending Dec. 7 (skipping Thanksgiving). The cost for the class is \$500, but this provides you with 5 important field guides as well as other materials and supplies. The course has limited capacity. Students can only miss one class. A second class may be missed under certain circumstances, which will be decided by the program director.

Registration and payment can be completed online at <http://www.clemson.edu/masternaturalist/>. Click on "take a course." Under "on-site training," click on "here." Make sure to register for the Master Naturalist Course and then select Sandhill as your site. It lists Florence as our home now, but that is incorrect, as we are in Columbia. **You can pay with credit card; it will ask for this info after you press "submit." This method is suggested since the mail will be slower. We can only accept the students in the order that their payments are received. Payment is nonrefundable.**

The goal of the course is not only to deliver knowledge of our local natural history, but also to produce trained volunteers (30 hours required) for various conservation endeavors. The latter should be an important consideration for anyone signing up!

Although the maximum daily instructional time will be from 9 to 3, students will be required to travel to training sites, most of which will be near the midlands. The first class at Sandhill will be located onsite, in the bottom of the lake house (follow the signs). However, throughout the season, we will make expeditions to the exciting and wild hinterlands within our region. This will include the majestic black waters of the Congaree Swamp, the vast pinelands of Carolina Sandhills Refuge, the granite wonders of Forty-acre Rock, the bewildering geology of Savage Bay, and the colorful seepage gardens and white cedar forests of Shealy's Pond.

Subject matter will not only include the natural history of the state and the places visited, but also our local flora and fauna. Students will need to pack lunch and be prepared for a day in the field. Because we are training to be naturalists, we must traverse the wild country, and so our excursions will at times involve mosquitoes, heat, and briars.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 864-313-4233 or rjenkin@clemson.edu. I hope to see you soon.

Austin Jenkins, PhD
Naturalist
Natural Resources Manager
Sandhill Research and Education Center
Clemson University



Carolina Coastal Adventure



The Carolina Coastal Adventure, October 12-14, provides a hands-on opportunity for 9th and 10th graders to learn about water resources and environmental conservation. High School students from all over the state gather in Berkeley County to camp on a lake, take trips all over the Coast and learn about water resources and conservation. Please contact Mary Jane Henderson at 803-576-2083 if you know of a student who may be interested.

Affiliate Members are a vital part of our conservation team. Without the monetary support given from Affiliates, we would not be able to carry out the many programs to promote "Conservation Stewardship" within the county. The Conservation District is committed to helping educate the students and landowners of Richland County. Become an affiliate member by sending this slip to:

**Richland Conservation District
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204**

I would like to become an Individual/Corporate sponsor of The Richland Conservation District

<input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate Basic Membership	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Affiliate Member	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Affiliate Member	\$125
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Affiliate Member	\$200 or more

Name_____

Address_____

City, St., Zip_____

Your contribution is tax deductible

Richland Conservation District

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Hemphill Pride, III
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Hugh Caldwell, District Manager
Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant
Mary Jane Henderson, Education Coordinator
LaKeisha Hill, Soil Conservationist, NRCS
Ricky Walker, Civil Engineer Tech. NRCS, Ft. Jackson
Joy Sullivan, Program Coordinator, DNR

PLEASE NOTE

The Richland Conservation District Commissioner's Board Meeting will be the second Monday of each month at Lizard's Thicket, 402 Beltline Blvd., Columbia, SC . Each meeting begins at 6:30 PM. The public is cordially invited to attend. For information on meetings please call 803-576-2080 or email fisherc@rcgov.us

The USDA prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age and disability.